

Message Text

SECRET

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12

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

----- 013928

O 250956Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3400

INFO AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MADRID 7471

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, UN, MR, MO, SP, AG, SS

SUBJ: SPANISH-MOROCCAN NEGOTIATIONS ON THE SAHARA: CON-
VERSATION WITH SOLIS

SUMMARY: MINISTER OF NATIONAL MOVEMENT SOLIS PROVIDED THE BACKGROUND FOR HIS MISSION TO RABAT AND THE IMPERATIVE REASONS WHY SPAIN HAD SOUGHT BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH MOROCCO ON THE SAHARA. HE EXPLAINED AS WELL WHY SPAIN NOW MUST SEPARATE THE BILATERAL SPANISH-MOROCCAN QUESTION FROM THE ATTITUDE OF ALGERIA TOWARD MOROCCO. SOLIS SPOKE OF HIS PREFERENCE FOR AN AUTONOMOUS ARRANGEMENT FOR THE SAHARA UNDER MOROCCO. HE ALSO SPOKE OF THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT'S CONCLUSION THAT IF THERE SHOULD BE A CONFLICT BETWEEN MOROCCO AND SPAIN, THE UNITED STATES WOULD SIDE WITH MOROCCO. HE WAS TOLD THAT THE US WAS STRICTLY NEUTRAL AS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. END SUMMARY.

1. AS A RESULT OF A MUTUAL EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN GETTING TOGETHER, MINISTER OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT SOLIS INVITED ME TO MEET WITH HIM YESTERDAY AFTERNOON. DURING THE COURSE OF OUR HOUR-LONG MEETING, HE VOLUNTEERED THE FOLLOWING WITH RESPECT TO THE SAHARA.

2. SOLIS SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN DESIGNATED BY THE GOVERN-
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MENT TO MEET FOREIGN MINISTER LARAKI AT THE AIRPORT EARLIER

IN THE DAY AND THAT HE WOULD BE DINING WITH HIM THAT EVENING, ALONG WITH ARIAS AND CORTINA WITH WHOM LARAKI WAS HAVING SEPARATE MEETINGS IN THE AFTERNOON. (IT IS RATHER SIGNIFICANT THAT CORTINA DID NOT GO TO THE AIRPORT TO MEET LARAKI.) SOLIS RECALLED THAT LARAKI'S VISIT TO MADRID WAS THE DIRECT OUTGROWTH OF SOLIS' OWN VISIT TO RABAT EARLY THIS WEEK.

3. SOLIS TOLD ME THAT IN HASSAN'S REPLY TO FRANCO'S LETTER OF APPROXIMATELY OCTOBER 8, HASSAN HAD SUGGESTED THAT FRANCO SEND AN EMISSARY AND, INDEED, HAD SUGGESTED SOLIS HIMSELF. SOLIS RECALLED THAT ON THREE SEPARATE OCCASIONS IN THE PAST YEARS, HE HAD BEEN DESIGNATED BY FRANCO TO NEGOTIATE CERTAIN MATTERS BETWEEN SPAIN AND MOROCCO. HE HAD FORMED A FRIENDSHIP WITH HASSAN WHICH HAD BEEN MAINTAINED OVER THE YEARS. WHEN HASSAN HAD ANNOUNCED THE "GREEN MARCH", THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT QUICKLY PERCEIVED THE EXTREMELY DANGEROUS SITUATION WHICH IT PRESENTED. A MARCH OF THIS SORT, WHICH COULD NOT BE CALLED OFF OR CONTROLLED AND WHICH WOULD INCLUDE IN IT PROVOCATORY ELEMENTS (INCLUDING ALGERIANS POSING AS F POLISARIO AND POSSIBLY VARIOUS TERRORIST ELEMENTS), COULD ONLY LEAD TO SOME DISASTROUS EPISODE INVOLVING A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN SPANISH (WHO WOULD HAVE TO DEFEND ITS TERRITORY AND MOROCCANS, THE DEATH OF MANY PEOPLE AND A SPIRALING CYCLE OF VIOLENCE. WHILE AN ARMY MIGHT BE STOPPED, A CIVILIAN MOB OF MANY HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS, ONCE SET INTO MOTION, COULD NOT BE CALLED BACK. THE SPANISH HAD THEN GONE TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL, BUT QUICKLY REALIZED THAT LITTLE OR NO HELP WOULD BE FORTHCOMING FROM THAT QUARTER, AND THAT THE SECURITY COUNCIL INVITATION TO NEGOTIATION COULD NOT BY ITSELF REDUCE THE OVERWHELMING DANGERS OF THE MARCH.

4. SOLIS SAID THAT SPANISH DIPLOMACY (AND ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT DIRECTLY CRITICAL OF CORTINA, THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT HE INCLUDED HIM IN HIS COMMENTS) HAD FOLLOWED TRADITIONAL LINES THROUGH THE UN, THROUGH EFFORTS AT A FOUR-PARTY CONFERENCE, ETC., BUT IT ALSO HAD SUCCEEDED IN CUTTING OFF ANY MEANINGFUL BILATERAL CONTACTS BETWEEN SPAIN AND MOROCCO. LAST MONDAY AT THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' MEETING IN MADRID, THE GOVERNMENT HAD FULLY REVIEWED THE SITUATION AND SOLIS HAD STRONGLY URGED

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THAT IN LIGHT OF THE DANGERS OF THE MARCH AND THE TOTAL LACK OF ACTION BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL, SPAIN'S PARAMOUNT INTEREST REQUIRED A DIRECT NEGOTIATION WITH MOROCCO. THERE HAD BEEN A LONG DISCUSSION AND IT HAD EVENTUALLY BEEN AGREED THAT ARIAS HIMSELF WOULD GO TO RABAT. THIS DECISION HAD BEEN SUPPORTED BY ALL THE MINISTERS, INCLUDING THE MILITARY ONES, THE GOVERNORS OF CEUTA AND MELILLA AND THE COLONELS COMMANDING SPANISH TROOPS IN THE AREA. AT 5:00 A.M., OCTOBER 21, SOLIS

HAD RECEIVED A TELEPHONE CALL FROM ARIAS WHO HAD INFORMED HIM OF FRANCO'S FURTHER HEART ATTACKS AND HAD THEN ASKED SOLIS HIMSELF TO UNDERTAKE THE MISSION TO RABAT. HE HAD LEFT A FEW HOURS LATER.

5. SOLIS SAID THAT HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH THE KING HAD BEEN REALISTIC, POSITIVE, HARD, AND FRUITFUL. SOLIS HAD INSISTED WITH THE KING THAT IT WAS INCONVEIVABLE THAT SPAIN AND MOROCCO COULD GO TO WAR. SPAIN DESIRED A FRIEDSHIP WITH MOROCCO AND DESIRED A CONTINUED AND PROSPEROUS REIGN BY HASSAN. SPAIN ALSO DESIRED TO GET OUT OF THE SAHARA. THE KING HAD INDICATED THAT HE COULD NOT STOP THE MARCH, FOR IF HE DID THAT WOULD BE THE END OF HIS REIGN. HOWEVER, HE COULD POSTPONE IT FOR FIFTEEN DAYS IN ORDER TO GIVE TIME FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATION. SOLIS THEN INDICATED THAT THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT IN MADRID FOR FURTHER TALKS.

6. DURING THE COURSE OF HIS MEETING WITH HASSAN, THE QUESTION OF CEUTA AND MELILLA HAD ARISEN. HASSAN HAD SAID THAT IF AGREEMENT COULD BE REACHED ON THE SAHARA, MOROCCO WOULD ONLY RAISE THE FUTURE OF CEUTA AND MELILLA WHEN SPAIN AND THE UK HAD SETTLED GIBRALTAR. THE KING HAD STATED THIS IN A JOKING MANNER ONLY TO INDICATED THAT THIS PROBLEM WAS ONE FOR THE DISTANT FUTURE.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

----- 014195

O 250956Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3401

INFO AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

7. SOLIS WENT ON TO SAY THAT SPAIN WAS FULLY CONSCIOUS OF THE ATTITUDE OF ALGERIA AND THE DANGERS WHICH THIS POSED. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PROBLEM WAS REALLY ONE BETWEEN SPAIN AND MOROCCO AND VERY SECONDARILY WITH MAURITANIA. SPAIN MUST FIND A SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM DIRECTLY WITH MOROCCO IF A TRAGIC CONFRONTATION OVER THE MARCH IS TO BE AVOIDED. THE PROBLEM OF ALGERIA WAS A DISTINCTLY SEPARATE ONE SINCE ALGERIA HAD NO TERRITORIAL CLAIMS TO THE SAHARA. HE HOPED THAT THE UNITED NATIONS WOULD BE ABLE IN SOME WAY TO HELP DE-FUSE THE ALGERIAN ATTITUDE WHICH, OF COURSE, WAS EXTREMELY HOSTILE TO MOROCCO AND TO ANY NOTION OF A MOROCCAN-SPANISH DEAL. BUT, SAID SOLIS, IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THE TWO MATTERS BE SEPARATED. ON THE ONE HAND WAS THE DIRECT PROBLEM OF THE MOROCCAN-SPANISH NEGOTIATION OVER THE SAHARA. THE OTHER PROBLEM WAS THE ALGERIAN ATTITUDE OF HOSTILITY TOWARD MOROCCO. WHILE IT WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE USEFUL IF ALL CONCERNED COULD REACH AGREEMENT, THE DANGERS OF THE MARCH PERMITTED NO DELAY IN EFFORTS TO FIND A SOLUTION.

8. SOLIS SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY FAVORED SOME ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY THE SAHARA WOULD BECOME AN AUTONOMOUS PROVINCE OF MOROCCO WHERE THE PEOPLE OF THE AREA WOULD HAVE SOME FORM OF SELF-GOVERNMENT. THIS WAS A POSITION THAT HE WAS PRESSING AND ONE WITH WHICH ARIAS SEEMED TO BE IN AGREEMENT. HE FRANKLY
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DID NOT KNOW HOW THE NEGOTIATION WOULD COME OUT, BUT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE WORLD TO SEE THAT SPAIN FOR ITS PART WAS NOW MAKING EVERY EFFORT IT COULD TO AVOID CONFRONTATION. IT WOULD BE A TRAGEDY FOR SPAIN, AS WELL IF THE SPANISH ARMY IN THE SAHARA SHOULD NOW BECOME INVOLVED IN A SHOOTING WAR. ITS DEPARTURE UNDER SUCH CONDITIONS WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE AND FIGHTING IN THE SAHARA COULD ONLY HAVE SERIOUS POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES IN SPAIN ITSELF. THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM WITH THE MILITARY IF THEY COULD LEAVE THE SAHARA PEACEFULLY AND HONORABLY.

9. SOLIS FINALLY INDICATED THAT WHEN HE HAD TOLD HASSAN THAT THE SPANISH ARMY WOULD LEAVE THE SAHARA, THE KING HAD REPLIED THAT HE NEEDED THE SPANISH ARMY THERE AND THAT HE WOULD BE WILLING TO FIND THE NECESSARY BASE FACILITIES. SOLIS INDICATED THAT THE SPANISH HAD LITTLE OR NO ENTHUSIASM FOR THAT IDEA.

10. DURING THE COURSE OF OUR CONVERSATION, SOLIS SAID THAT THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT HAD CONCLUDED THAT IN THE EVENT OF A WAR BETWEEN MOROCCO AND SPAIN, THE UNITED STATES WOULD SIDE WITH MOROCCO. I TOLD SOLIS THAT THE POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES WAS ONE OF THE STRICTEST NEUTRALITY BETWEEN THE PARTIES WITH REGARD TO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE QUESTION. HE HAD URGED ALL CONCERNED TO EXERT EVERY EFFORT TO FIND A PEACEFUL, NEGOTIATED

SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM AND THAT WE HAD MADE THIS POINT ONLY RECENTLY IN BOTH MADRID AND IN RABAT. I TOLD HIM THAT WE, LIKE SPAIN, BELIEVED THAT THE INTERESTS OF THE WEST WERE BEST SERVED BY SUPPORTING A MODERATE REGIME UNDER HASSAN IN MOROCCO. TO THIS END, HE HAD UNDERTAKEN AN ARMS SALES PROGRAM, BUT WE HAD KEPT THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT FULLY ADVISED ON THIS. SPAIN AND MOROCCO WERE TWO GOOD FRIENDS OF THE UNITED STATES; WE HOPED THAT THEY WOULD FIND A NEGOTIATED STEELEMENT TO THE PROBLEM AND THAT CONFRONTATION COULD BE AVOIDED. I STRESSED AGAIN THAT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT WAS ERRONEOUS AS WE ARE NEUTRAL AS BETWEEN MOROCCO AND SPAIN ON THE SAHARA ISSUE.

11. SOLIS VOLUNTEERED THAT HE WOULD LET ME KNOW HOW THE CONVERSATIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER LARAKI HAD DEVELOPED. STABLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MADRID07471
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750372-0364
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751018/aaaaaprz.tel
Line Count: 238
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 JUN 2003 by SmithRJ>; APPROVED <29 OCT 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SPANISH-MOROCCAN NEGOTIATIONS ON THE SAHARA: CON- VERSATION WITH SOLIS
TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, MR, MO, SP, AG, SS, UN, (SOLIS RUIZ, JOSE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006